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AFTER PERON, WHAT?

—Jaime Potenze

THE

Commonweal

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by Bede Griffiths

Varieties of Innocence

by Gerald Weales

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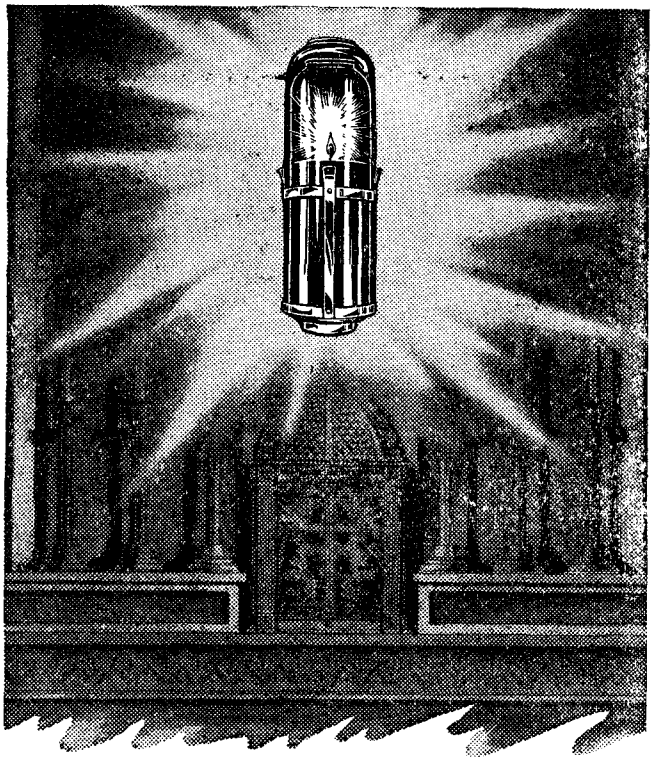

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THIS WEEK

Week by Week 51

Fulfillment for the East
by Bede Griffiths 55

After Perón, What?
by Jaime Potenze 58

Varieties of Innocence
by Gerald Weales 61

The Stage
by Richard Hayes 62

The Screen
by Philip T. Hartung 63

Communications 64

Books 67

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The
Commonweal
week by week

"CONFIDENTIAL INFORMANTS"

MR. J. Edgar Hoover has achieved a status in American life that is almost unique. In law-enforcing circles he is, we suppose, what Knute Rockne was to football, or Babe Ruth to baseball. And like them, he is virtually untouchable. Without being himself in politics, he has great political power, at least in a negative sense; theoretically he is subject to political control, but actually the officeholder who dared to tangle with him would have to be a brave man, willing to risk political suicide—after all, who threw rocks at Babe Ruth?

In the normal course of events, therefore, elected officials fall all over themselves in their haste to identify themselves with the values Mr. Hoover represents any time an occasion arises. Witness, for example, the embarrassingly obvious desire of the principals on both sides of the Army-McCarthy hearings to drape themselves in the Hoover mantle. How such national symbol-figures arise is hard to say, but the fact that he has become one is a tribute to Mr. Hoover the man and the public official. Certainly, he stands for many good and wholesome things; the comparison with Knute Rockne is not so far-fetched as it might at first appear. His views on national problems like juvenile delinquency are good, and his remarks on the role of home and family highly moral. He has fought crime with devotion, ability, and success. But when Mr. Hoover the law-enforcement officer gets into the area of recommendations on political policy, his untouchable status seems to inhibit public discussion beyond all reason. Nevertheless, we hope this will not be the case in connection with his recent remarks on the subject of confidential informants, which have already received considerable publicity.

Mr. Hoover thinks the confidential informant, to use his phrase, is being smeared by Communists and their sympathizers. We think so too, and we do not believe there is much argument about it. The Communists have been hurt by party members who have left and told all they knew to the FBI, and they have waged a steady campaign of hate and slander against the ex-Communists. This is a matter of common knowledge, and there is nothing surprising here. But when Mr. Hoover goes beyond this fact to attack what he calls "pseudo-liberals" (that phrase again), apparently because he equates any critical evaluation of current security procedures with softness toward Communism, he is on shakier ground.

IN Mr. Hoover's book, "pseudo-liberals" are described as those who "present the menace of Communism as a myth of hysteria; urge that we tolerate the subversive acts of Communists because Communists are only 'non-conformists'. . ." Unless Mr. Hoover is choosing to call the editors of the *Daily Worker* "pseudo-liberals," we cannot identify his target; we do not know any liberals, as opposed to Communist party-liners, who hold the positions he describes.

Offhand, the best known critics of certain confidential informants we can think of are the Alsop brothers; we feel sure they would not be caught dead subscribing to the credo Mr. Hoover outlines. As we read the Alsops and others like them, they are questioning the credibility of certain witnesses, citing chapter and verse; to best them in the argument, it is really not necessary to denounce them as "pseudo-liberals" doing the work of the Communists but simply to disprove their citations which indicate internal contradictions in a witness' testimony.

To be realistic, we think, Mr. Hoover will have to face the fact that, no matter what he says, the confidential informant will never be a truly popular institution—necessary, perhaps, but popular, no. All of us were raised with the idea that "tattle-tales" are contemptible, and there is no real outgrowing it. As adults, Americans will recognize the necessity of such testimony on occasion, but not even J. Edgar Hoover can make the institution a popular one. And although most

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U. S. citizens will recognize the special value of the ex-Communist informant in security cases, there should be no implication that such witnesses are beyond criticism. We think those who insist on constant evaluation of such witnesses for reliability and credibility are doing just as much of a service to American life as Mr. Hoover is in his department. Civil liberties, the observance of the due process of law—these are at the heart of the American way, and, it must be added, law-enforcement officers are rarely their best protectors.

Organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union, say, or the Fund for the Republic, are specifically concerned with the preservation of these fundamentals of our system. In the process, it is natural that they will sometimes raise questions embarrassing to law-enforcement officers, and often in connection with the cases of people who may be highly suspect. This could hardly be otherwise. If Joe DiMaggio were on trial, it is highly unlikely that his civil liberties would be violated, for such violations normally take place when the person involved is without the support of public sympathy or public interest. In cases where public opinion is against the accused, some of the opprobrium directed against him rubs off onto those who enter the case on a civil liberties basis, and it then is easy enough to denounce them as "pseudo-liberals" who are doing the work of the Communists. That, we think, explains much of the name-calling that is now going on. It is easy enough; it is also, we think, profoundly unfair.

NEXT WEEK

MICHAEL HARRINGTON writes on the twentieth century political novel for the Fall Book Issue.

"The terrible moments, Dostoievski says, reduce man to his most basic self, until life is all essence. The terrible moments of the twentieth century have done this same thing to the political novel; they have reduced it to basic categories, from politics to metaphysics, from the macrocosm of collective struggle to the microcosmic world of individual decision. In the work of André Malraux, Arthur Koestler, Ignacio Silone, Manes Sperber, the affirmation—if there is one—no longer proclaims the proletarian, the urban citizen of some future society. It asserts rather the peasant, singing like Ecclesiastes that there is a time for sowing and a time for reaping. . . . At the end of Malraux's *Walnut Trees,* for example, the eternal peasants are seen in the very midst of the battle—enduring."

FRANCE QUITS THE UN ASSEMBLY

TWO aspects of the French withdrawal from the deliberations of the United Nations Assembly—when the majority voted to discuss the Algerian question—stand out in sharp contrast. The first arises from the many justifications for this dramatic step. The French are legally quite within their rights according to the Charter, since Algeria is an integral part of France, with its own handful of representatives in the French Parliament. (Domestic issues are specifically barred from UN deliberations.)

The French are also right in objecting to being singled out in this fashion. Why should they, who are at least working on certain reforms, be subject to such a scrutiny, while the present unvarying status of such subject political entities as Estonia, North Ireland or Hawaii go unchallenged? Does not the main threat of further subjection of nations and peoples actually reside behind the Iron Curtain?

All this leads to the wider question of the advisable limits for the present scope of the United Nations. It is particularly inopportune to seek to widen the UN's range before its present functions become more solidly established. There are too many political situations that do fall under its agreed-upon purview, too many joint activities in the area of technical, agricultural, medical and educational progress that would be jeopardized by embarking on a new range of highly inflammable academic discussions. (Even in the case of the most flagrant colonial oppression conceivable it would be hard to come by the two-thirds vote required for adopting so much as a resolution of censure.)

But there lies the contrast. The French, if well within their rights and correct in their concept of the functions of the UN, are in fact handling their North African problem very badly. That is a subject of intense general concern. The well-being of the peoples of Algeria and Morocco, preeminently, is scarcely a private matter. Moreover, the present disposition of the French armed forces greatly weakens NATO's West European defenses, while a full-scale war of attempted suppression—which now threatens—would, among other things, threaten to seal the doom of France as a nation. For such reasons alone, shortsighted French policy in Algeria, Morocco and Tunis has far-reaching consequences in many lands.

But if the UN is at present neither legally entitled nor practically fitted to discuss the question, can no other feasible means of international pressure be found? The United States, for instance,

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The Case of Robert Barrat

ROBERT BARRAT, though still a young man, has an international reputation as a Catholic journalist and French patriot. During the war he was a leader of the Resistance—and a hero in the most authentic sense of the term. Since the war he has been secretary of the *Centre des Intellectuelles Catholiques Francais,* a regular contributor to *L'Express* and *France-Observateur,* and Paris correspondent for The Commonweal. In these various roles he has demonstrated again and again his faith, his honesty, his courage—his hatred of injustice, oppression and hypocrisy. Robert Barrat is a man who has given his talents to the fight for honor and truth.

Part of this fight has been over the tortured problem of Morocco. M. Barrat has opposed France's policy in North Africa and has supported what he considers the Moroccans' legitimate struggle for independence. And because he is a man who seeks out the truth, he has traveled widely in Morocco to talk with those who fight and suffer there.

In 1953 M. Barrat published a book on the terrible things he had seen and heard in his travels. It was called *Justice for Morocco—Justice Pour Le Maroc*—and it was dedicated "To My Moroccan Friends in Prison." Robert Barrat felt shame for France because of North Africa; in a preface written for the book Francois Mauriac expressed his feeling of shame too, and joined M. Barrat in the search for an alleviation of Morocco's agony. At the end of the preface, after recalling so much in North Africa that might lead to despair, M. Mauriac recalled the words of Christ: "Have confidence. I have overcome the world."

Now we learn that, because of what he has written (and what he has refused to write), Robert Barrat may soon join his friends in prison. In September he toured Algeria and talked with rebel leaders. He reported what he had seen and what he felt in *France-Observateur.* What he had seen and what he felt did not please officials of the French State, and at dawn on a recent Monday morning he was arrested.

The Ministry of the Interior then announced that Robert Barrat was charged with "failure to denounce crimes compromising the security of the State" and that he would be taken to Algiers for trial by a military court. The outcome of such a trial seems certain, and the probable sentence is ten years imprisonment.

Robert Barrat's crime is that he believes justice lies with the North African Nationalist cause. For this he may be imprisoned by a State which takes pride in its culture and freedom. As in the Dreyfus Affair, a matter of "security" is involved, and an individual Frenchman is apparently to be sacrificed to it.

Fortunately for France, as well as for Robert Barrat, a great protest was made when the Ministry of the Interior announced this arrest. The Catholic press joined the Socialist press to denounce the outrage. M. Barrat, as a result, has not yet been delivered to the judgment of a military court in Algiers. He is now released on bail.

What the outcome will be we do not know. What we do know is that by this action a great nation has been shamed, and we unite our voices with those many in France demanding that the shame be erased. We join those also who pray that in the case of Robert Barrat honesty and honor will not again find themselves languishing in some dark prison cell.

can make plain the impact of these developments on American public opinion through the normal diplomatic channels. Their effect on our alliance is also a proper subject for discussion in the NATO councils, special meetings of allied defense ministers and similar occasions. Other nations friendly to France can likewise tactfully but firmly make their sentiments known. For if the French authorities still have the lesson of Indochina to take to heart, so must the United States and others ponder their own mistakes there, if a tragedy of even greater proportions is not to befall North Africa and France herself. That is the present stake in Algeria and Morocco.

SINCE GENEVA

IT lasted so short a time, the summer of the Geneva conference, and has become so rapidly a thing of the past. Even as the Big Four Foreign Ministers prepare for their turn at Geneva, we can make the assessment which a lengthened perspective offers. We can remain pleased that the

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tenor of discussions between Russia and the West has changed, that commerce between the two is easier. But this is on the fringe of the picture. What looms large at the center are Russia's real accomplishments.

While some, with the knowledge of past betrayals, have warned of harsh days to come, and others have relaxed in the sun, Russia has been making diplomatic hay. For example, according to Deputy Chancellor Franz Bluecher of Germany, the Soviet release of German prisoners "is an act of humanity and no political act."

Even if this were true, the act has strong political consequences. Chancellor Adenauer was under strong pressure to get the prisoners back to Germany. He succeeded at the cost of establishing diplomatic relations with Russia. He had scarcely left Moscow when the Russians extended their courtesies, even more warmly, to East Germany, abolished surface controls and restored it to "sovereign" status. Russia is now in the pleasant position of being in communication with both parts of the divided Germany. She will be able to speak from a position of acknowledged diplomatic strength at the coming conference when unification of Germany will be one of the major issues.

Nor has Russia confined her attention to those issues which are to be discussed. For years, conditions in the Middle East have, at best, been uneasy. Our policy has been to maintain a balance between the Arabs and the Israelis by limiting our shipments of arms to each.

Egypt has long tried to gain additional weapons for "defense" purposes, weapons which would grant superiority to the Arabs. Unable to secure them from the Western powers, she has turned to the Communists. In exchange for Egyptian cotton she is to receive heavy arms from Czechoslovakia. Egyptian Premier Nasser has stated with vigor that his government, after getting rid of the British and keeping Americans out, has no intention of letting the Communists in.

In spite of such assurance, the arms-cotton trade reveals the weakness in our Middle East policy, strengthens the Russian position, and makes a critical area more critical. And it is all done with smiles on the parts of the Russians. They continue to make friends. In Italy and France the Communists now encounter noticeably less active opposition.

With such changes on the world scene, the hopes of reaching agreement on disarmament, the other major issue for the coming conference, grow faint. And such changes should teach us something about the rigors of coexistence.

UNITED NATIONS WEEK

IT is greatly to be hoped that the various public statements and observances planned for the week of October 16-24 will have a marked impact throughout the United States. Although this country was one of the UN's principal founders and UN headquarters is in New York, the impression is unavoidable that the American people regard the organization with mixed feelings. It is better known in this country as the scene of Soviet obstructionism and for American controversies over UNESCO than for its achievements or the ardent hopes it inspires in many lands. Its possibilities are indicated simply by running over a few current UN activities.

There is the work of the Food and Agriculture Organization in the many hungry areas of the world, the worldwide UN's Children's Fund, (which has rendered aid to 30,000,000) the historic stand in Korea, the battle against illiteracy and disease in many lands, the vital loans of the World Bank, UN aid in major natural catastrophes and the importance of the United Nations as a forum of world opinion. The UN has accomplished much in its first ten years. It could accomplish considerably more with the wholehearted support of the American people.

EDUCATION IN A DEMOCRACY

WHAT is the proper system of education for a democracy? The question is not merely academic. A casual glance at newspapers, magazine covers, and book jackets suggests the extent of our present problems. Schools are overcrowded, teachers are lacking, and the real jump in college enrollment is yet to come.

Of the many who could, presumably, go on to college, who should be encouraged? Should the applicants be carefully screened, so that we educate only the highly qualified? Or should we expand our present facilities to accommodate all who can afford to enter? These are problems which we will be forced to answer soon. And any answer will bring its own headaches. As education costs mount, revenue must be found. Fewer students can go through college on their own. Scholarships, grants, student-exchanges—we will need more of each. And the task of distributing State and Federal aid is not simple in localities where segregation is still the rule.

We will only find solutions if we realize the harsh realities, but at present the problems seem bigger than any proposed solutions.

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Fulfillment for the East

"THE QUESTION IS WHETHER OR NOT THE SPIRITUAL TRADITION OF INDIA CAN WITHSTAND THE SHOCK OF WESTERN MATERIALISM"

BEDE GRIFFITHS

INDIA today is going through a critical phase in its history. Its people have become independent again, and India is engaged in establishing its position as a world power. It has taken over the forms of our Western civilization, and the process of transformation into a modern democratic state is under way. Industrialization is going ahead rapidly, and in a great city like Bombay one finds all the latest developments in modern style and technique. Everywhere one sees magnificent buildings, banks, insurance companies, technical institutes, hospitals, cinemas, huge blocks of flats in concrete, and palatial mansions in a blend of all the styles of East and West. There are electric trains, buses (curiously reminiscent of London) and taxis everywhere, and the most luxurious American cars. But with all this the old life of the East goes on relatively undisturbed. The bazaars in the heart of the city are as picturesque and colorful as ever; men go about barefoot and clothed in all manner of costumes; the women in their *saris* walk with a grace and dignity which puts modern fashions to shame; and children swarm everywhere, running about barelegged and carefree. The total result is an astonishing fusion of ancient and modern, of East and West, and yet somehow harmonious and coherent.

Here is a whole new world which is coming into being, rich with promise for the future of mankind. For it is not only the future of India which is at stake. India has taken all that the West has to give, both good and bad. With our political institutions and our economic techniques, it has taken also our Western habits of life and thought. Everywhere one sees American films and American magazines, and in the bookshops are all the latest products of Western science and philosophy. Inevitably, India is being infected by the materialism and skepticism of the West, whether it comes in the extreme form of Marxism or the more enlightened forms of Western humanism. The question is whether or not the spiritual tradition of India can withstand the shock of Western materialism. On this point, it is not too much to say, the fate of the world depends. It is not the conflict between Communism and the West which is really fundamental, but the conflict between materialism in all its forms and the spiritual tradition of mankind, of which India is a great representative.

THROUGHOUT its history, India has been devoted above almost all peoples to the search for God. Indian religion has been called the "most searching quest for the Divine in the natural order that the world has known." The characteristic of this religion is that it has always ranked contemplation and the contemplative life as the supreme goal of human life. Some of the earliest Indian scriptures were the work of men who retired into the forest to live lives of solitude in meditation and asceticism. To this day it remains the ideal of Hindu religion that after passing through the two first stages of life, that of the student and the householder, a man should pass on to the higher stage of renunciation of the world and contemplation in preparation for death. A similar ideal of contemplation as the end of life was held among the ancient Greeks, but for the Greek, contemplation always tended to center on the nature of man and the universe. In India, on the other hand, contemplation has always been concerned not with man or nature, but with the ultimate reality, the true Self, which is the ground of all existence.

We in the West have inherited the tradition of the Greeks, and our attention, especially since the Renaissance, has been concentrated on the study of man and the universe. As a result, we have built up a body of scientific and humanist knowledge which has transformed the world, but we have almost entirely lost the knowledge of God, of the ultimate reality without which all other knowledge can only lead to disaster. That is the tragedy of the West,

Bede Griffiths, O.S.B., formerly a monk of Prinknash Abbey in England, is the author of *The Golden String*, published earlier this year. His article is sent from Nirmalashram, Kengeri, N. Bangalore, India, where despite limited material resources he and an Indian Benedictine are trying to establish a local Benedictine foundation under the Archbishop's jurisdiction.

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and it has led to the threat of physical destruction which faces us today. If we are to recover our sanity and save our souls, we have to discover again the true source of knowledge, of life and reality, and learn to integrate our science and humanism with this perennial truth.

WHAT is the nature of the spiritual tradition which is found in its purest form in India and constitutes the supreme heritage of mankind? It is simply this. There is one absolute, eternal, infinite, unchanging Being, which is the unique source of all existence, of all knowledge and of all life; which is above all things and in all things and for which all things exist. This absolute Being may be conceived in different terms, but in one form or another it is the basis of all religion, not only in India but in China and throughout the East. This is the basis of what we have called the spiritual tradition of mankind and the ground of all religion.

What, then, is the relation of man and the universe to this absolute Being? Man is an Image of God; the universe is a finite reflection of this infinite Being, a reflection of the One in the many, of the eternal in time, of the infinite in space. Here again this relationship may be differently conceived, but fundamentally it will be found that this is its nature. The universe is not an "illusion" as it is sometimes said; it has a certain reality, but it is the reality of a reflection in a mirror. Apart from its source it has no reality at all. The real illusion is to mistake the material universe for an independent reality. This is the great illusion of the West, which constitutes materialism. It is against this illusion that the whole of Eastern doctrine stands, by affirming the absolute reality of God alone and the wholly dependent and relative reality of the physical universe.

How does man enter into relation with this infinite and eternal Being? Here again there is a deep cleavage between East and West. We in the West have grown up under the influence of Aristotle and the Greeks. We think of reason acting upon the evidence of the senses as the normal mode of human knowledge. But in the East it has always been understood that there is a higher mode of knowledge than sense or reason—the knowledge of spiritual intuition, a knowledge not dependent on the senses or on any logical process, but on the soul's direct, intuitive awareness of itself. This it is which has been sought in the East from time immemorial and which gives the true knowledge of God. It is a knowledge derived from contemplation, a wisdom which descends from above and directly enlightens the soul. To this knowledge all images and concepts can only act as "supports"; it transcends the finite order and unites man directly with God.

THIS, we would say, is the basis of all Oriental doctrine, of that spiritual tradition which underlies all ancient religion and which survives today in India and the East. But granting this, there are two questions which have to be asked. First, what is the validity of this claim to a higher mode of knowledge? And, secondly, what relation does the whole of this tradition bear to Christianity, and particularly to Catholicism?

We have to recognize that this tradition is not found only in the East. It entered into the current of Western thought with Pythagoras and Plato and finds its most eminent exponent in the West in Plotinus. Such a concourse of the greatest minds of East and West, covering thousands of years of human history and permeating the religion of millions of people, is surely in itself an impressive witness to its truth. In a sense, of course, it cannot be proved. One can only prove it by experience, just as if someone claims that a play of Shakespeare or a symphony of Beethoven gives him a unique kind of experience, one cannot either prove or disprove the validity of the claim. It is a matter of experience.

But for a Catholic there is evidence of another kind. The influence of Aristotle, with his logical and analytical method, on our philosophy and theology has been so great that we sometimes forget that our theology was originally formed in the school of Plato. The Greek Fathers were almost all Platonists, and the founder of Latin theology in the West, St. Augustine, has left on record the fact that he owed the first illumination of his mind to Plato. It is, in fact, precisely this spiritual tradition of the East, coming to us through Plato and Plotinus, which lies at the heart of our Catholic theology. When St. Thomas introduced the exact method of Aristotle into theology, he did not discard this Platonic tradition; on the contrary, he incorporated it. His theology is a synthesis of Plato and Aristotle based on the original Hebrew-Christian revelation.

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St. Thomas' conception of God is identical with that of Eastern tradition, as we have described it. In the question of the relation between the universe and God, St. Thomas introduced an exact conception of creation which clarifies the Eastern tradition, but leaves it essentially unchanged. And in the matter of the knowledge of God by contemplation, St. Thomas clearly recognizes a mode of knowledge above both reason and faith, admitting man to knowledge of God by experience, an infused wisdom in which the soul becomes passive to the divine action, *patiens divina.*

We have, then, the right to say that this spiritual tradition is an integral part of Catholicism. It is, in fact, nothing but that perennial philosophy, that universal metaphysical tradition, which is the basis of all religion, both Eastern and Western. To this tradition Catholicism gives a precision which is generally lacking in the East. It firmly upholds the absolute transcendence of God, while admitting his immanence in all creation. It asserts the reality of the material creation while allowing that this reality is wholly relative and dependent on the absolute being of God. Above all, it brings the whole of this tradition into relation with the doctrine of the Incarnation, of man's salvation through the redeeming death of Christ and his need of God's grace if he is to enter into a living relation with Him.

CATHOLICISM thus acts to confirm and strengthen the tradition of the East by giving it its center in history and making it a dynamic force in the world. It is here, surely, that the hope of the future lies. If we could recognize the profound affinity which underlies the religions of East and West and explore more and more deeply this metaphysical doctrine which we hold in common, we should open the way to an approach to the East on a deeper level than has yet been made. Then we should perhaps be able to lead the East to see that their own tradition is wonderfully fulfilled in Catholicism, losing nothing of its richness, but receiving strength and confirmation. At the same time we should find our own faith enriched and enlarged.

For this is not simply a matter of philosophy. We cannot enter into the Eastern tradition unless we are prepared to meet its representatives on the level of contemplation. It is in union with God—beyond images and concepts—in the ground of the soul that the true meeting must take place. This means that we have to recover our own contemplative tradition, to penetrate more deeply into the mystery of the Scriptures and the Liturgy, to follow out consistently that path of purgation, illumination and union, which leads to an experimental knowledge of God. In other words, we have to revive the contemplative life among ourselves.

It is a remarkable fact that until recently there has not been a single contemplative monastery for men in India. The Church in India has grown wonderfully in recent years: from being a missionary Church with a largely foreign clergy, it has grown into a great national Church with its own Cardinal and a large majority of Indian bishops and clergy. It has its schools and colleges and seminaries where Indian priests are being trained; religious orders like the Jesuits, the Redemptorists, the Carmelites and the Franciscans are firmly established. But there are as yet no contemplative monasteries, apart from a heroic attempt on the part of two French Fathers, Père le Saux and the Abbé Monchanin, to introduce a strict form of the eremitical life, and a foundation from St. André in Belgium, which has already many vocations but is not strictly contemplative. Both of these have attempted to introduce certain adaptations to Indian manners and customs, of which the value

has still to be proved. There is surely a great need for a foundation following the traditional pattern of the monastic life, centered on the sacred liturgy and giving contemplation its place as the supreme object of life.

The civilization of Europe was built on these foundations in the Middle Ages. We owe it to the Rule of St. Benedict that this ideal of contemplation was kept steadily before men's eyes and all human activity was seen to be subordinate to this one supreme end. If the Church is to fulfil in the modern world her function of keeping before men's eyes the ideal of contemplation as the end of human life upon which the value and efficacy of all human action and all human knowledge depend, then it is to the contemplative orders that she must turn. In the monastic life, both work and study have their place. A monastery must strive to be self-supporting; it will aim at having its own farm and garden, at producing all that is necessary for its daily needs, at doing all necessary work for itself. But all this work

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will be kept strictly subordinate to the one object of contemplation and the love of God. All work will be a "work of God," done in God's service and made as far as possible into a means of union with God. This witness to the essential dignity of labor is surely one of the most important forms of the apostolate in modern times.

In the same way a monastery will have its regular course of studies. These will be based on the Scriptures and the Fathers and will aim especially at recovering that deep sense of the "mystery" of the Scriptures, which is our great inheritance from the early Church. But it will not neglect the study of philosophy and theology in that great tradition which found its supreme expression in the *Summa* of St. Thomas. It is here that in India there should be found a place for the study of the metaphysical tradition of the East. But this will not be merely a scholarly study of Eastern doctrine; like everything else, study must be subordinated to the end of contemplation. We must learn to see in both philosophy and theology not an end but a means towards a deeper apprehension of the reality of God. It is here in particular that Eastern thought can help us to realize that all discursive and analytical thought is no more than a mode of preparation for that deeper understanding, that wisdom which comes from contemplation and is the gift of God.

So finally all monastic life will find its center in the liturgy, the work of God *par excellence*. At regular hours throughout the day and night the monk turns to this act of prayer and worship by which he bears witness continually to the supreme reality of God. This is the function of the monk in the Church, to bear witness by his prayer and his praise and his worship, by the total sacrifice of his life, that God alone is the unique source of life and truth and love in the world. By this means it will surely be possible to unite ourselves with the heart of India, with that spiritual tradition which runs through all Indian life and thought. Then it may be that India will come to see in the Church the fulfillment of her age-long quest for God, and in Christ to recognize the Savior, Who alone can deliver us from the power of this world, from those forces of materialism and skepticism which threaten to destroy the world.

FROM ARGENTINA

After Perón, What?

JAIME POTENZE

Buenos Aires

BUENOS Aires never before witnessed a crowd as large as that which assembled when General Eduardo Lonardi took office as Provisional President of the Argentine Republic. The historic Plaza de Mayo was jammed. Estimates of the crowd ran from five hundred thousand to a million persons; despite great pressure from various government agencies, the last meeting Perón had called attracted only a hundred and fifty thousand people. In all this assembled mass it would be no exaggeration to say that less than one per cent had the vaguest idea of General Lonardi's identity. The only thing that mattered was the overthrow of Perón and his regime; anyone capable of that had the support of the people. "Anything is better than Perón," was the dominant sentiment.

Only those who were present can describe the popular enthusiasm that greeted General Lonardi when he appeared on the balcony of the Government House after taking the oath of office. Normally the people of Argentina are quite reserved and, unlike many other Latin Americans, dislike expressing their feelings in public. But on this occasion the people danced, sang and embraced one another. Waving little Argentine flags, men, women and children greeted each other with the warmest smiles. After twelve years of sullen faces and suspicious looks, a truly fraternal spirit was manifest. The most important freedom of all, freedom from fear, had been won.

It was only three weeks before and in that very place that Perón had said that any citizen who encountered another making an attempt against "law and order" could kill him without the slightest hesitation. And he had declared that for every Peronista killed, five foes of Perón would be slain. Until the final revolution broke out, life was a nightmare in Argentina. The uprising of June 16 had been very badly timed and was put down. Moreover, the fact

Mr. Potenze, an Argentine journalist and Christian Democrat, has written frequently on the Perón regime for The Commonweal.

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that the air force bombed the Plaza de Mayo without previous warning, thereby killing many innocent people, hardly contributed to making that revolt a popular one. Some day we shall learn why the officers ordered that operation; from a civilian's point of view it was clearly a mistake. This time everything went smoothly. After a struggle which lasted only a few days, Perón fell. The battle was won—or at least the first phase of it. Now we must face the non-military part of our national problem.

IN the course of twelve years Perón managed to turn himself into a myth. That is, of course, a common enough phenomenon in Latin American republics where the Spanish tradition is still strong. In Spain it was customary to swear allegiance to the king, and in South America the institution of the *caudillo* or chief has a kind of fascination for the people. Men die easily for a man, and in South America loyalty to a leader means readiness to give one's life for him. One of the most powerful Peronist slogans was: *"La vida por Perón"* ("my life for Perón"), which was shouted by thousands of fanatics at the big party meetings. Although it is undoubtedly true that not all those who shouted this slogan were actually willing to shed their blood for Perón, there is no denying the extent of the popularity he once had.

Perón was no fool. He succeeded in large measure because he marched under the banner of social justice, an emblem which previous governments had completely ignored. The fact that he brought with him demagoguery, corruption, immorality and tyranny meant little to many of his followers. To them, Perón meant better wages, pensions, bonuses and—above all—giving the workers a seat in the front row. If you were a worker under Perón, you were "somebody," a fact of great psychological importance.

In these first moments of exultation, there is not much time to think of such things. But in a few weeks the tide will have receded, and then General Lonardi and his followers will face a very big problem. Pius XI said that the greatest scandal of the nineteenth century was the loss of the working classes by the Church. If our new President cannot win the working classes, he will fail.

In his initial address, President Lonardi said that the social gains achieved during the Perón regime will be expanded. During the early crucial period, radio programs were interrupted every ten minutes so the people could be assured that "in spite of rumors to the contrary, the gains of the working classes will be maintained." Such measures were necessary because these rumors were being spread by Peronistas and Communists, who realize that this is the only card they can play under the circumstances. But the dangerous thing is that there are a few people whose conduct seems to bear out such rumors. Already there have been some cases in which employers arbitrarily fired employees on the assumption that things have changed and that therefore they may act as they please. These are the worst enemies of the revolution. They do not understand that the Peronista coup was made possible in the first place by those employers and managers who, on October 11, 1945, two days after Perón had fallen, called their workers together to tell them there would be no further gains for them, and that if they felt this was unjust the best thing they could do was to go and bring Perón back. That, of course, was exactly what the workers proceeded to do. By now, this kind of blindness should have disappeared, but some people never learn their lesson.

In order to win the Argentine workers to the cause of democracy, General Lonardi will have to be very cautious, and he will have to manifest a true spirit of social reform. This regime is only temporary, so the main job will be in the hands of those who will make up the succeeding legal government, but the course things take during the interval will be of basic importance.

AT this moment many currents are stirring in the Argentine political scene. First of all, it would be childish to believe that after defeat the Peronistas have vanished into thin air. It is true that Perón meant almost everything for them, but it must not be forgotten that once he has reached Paraguay he will start planning how to come back. A second important factor is the division which exists among Perón's opponents.

The middle class Radical Party, the largest opposition group, is itself divided into three branches: the *frondizistas* who follow Arturo Frondizi and constitute the left wing; the *unionistas* who represent the right; the *sabattinistas* who follow Amadeo Sabattini, the former governor of Cordoba and who are more inclined toward the left. This division is a rigid one because Arturo Frondizi refuses any compromises with the others and claims that those who are affiliated with his group are the true radicals.

The conservatives form a small minority and suffer from the electoral frauds which they practiced when they were in power. Needless to say, they are great defenders of "tradition" and it is possible that some reactionary Catholics will give them their votes because they advocate "law and order." A recent radio address by their leader, Vincente Solano Lima, was an obvious plea directed at such Catholics.

The Socialists are very honest, and some of their

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leaders combine intelligence with probity. Outside the city districts, however, they have very few followers. Much the same thing can be said of the leftist *democrata-progresistas* and of the Communists, who, true to form, are always proposing "a united front of all the free and democratic forces in defense of peace."

The Christian Democrats are a new party in Argentine and how many voters its program will attract is hard to say. For one thing, there are a number of pseudo-Christian-Democratic movements which confuse the issues and sabotage the real party. The explanation of this state of affairs is quite simple.

As everyone knows, the activity of Catholics was one of the main forces in the overthrow of Perón. When he opened his anti-religious campaign, the handwriting on the wall was plain, and the Catholic vote became increasingly important. Since the Christian Democratic parties have had great popular success in Italy, Germany and France, this title has been claimed by all sorts of people, many of whom had until recently considered democracy a political heresy. There is,

for instance, the *Partido Laborista Cristiano,* which is a conglomeration of former *aliancistas* (the Perón SS) and nationalists; it even includes the former president of a committee which advocated the restoration of citizenship to Juan Manuel de Rosas, the worst tyrant we have ever had up to and including Perón. There is the *Union Federal* which includes repentant Peronistas, nationalists and some honest people with no political memory. There are, besides, three or four assorted groups of opportunists. And there are, of course, the real Christian Democrats.

Until recently, the genuine Christian Democratic party was split into two groups. It is today largely made up of honest men who lack political experience but who have studied social problems seriously and conscientiously. It includes men of both rightist and leftist tendencies, among them leaders of real worth, such as Juan T. Lewis, to mention the most distinguished of them all.

As far as support goes, it must be admitted that the leaders of the Argentine Church have in the past given little encouragement to the Christian Democratic movement. Nine years ago *Estrada,* a paper which managed to obtain a circulation of 45,000, a very high figure for an ideological weekly, was banned by Cardinal Copello under pain of mortal sin. Then there were Archbishops (among them Monsignor Guilland of Parana, Monsignor Tavella of Salta and Monsignor Hanlon of Catamarca) who thought Perón was not such a bad fellow after all. One priest, Father Virgilio Filippo, served as a Peronist deputy while he continued to function as pastor at the Belgrano parish. Cardinal Caggiano, in an article in *Criterio* (the most important and influential Catholic magazine in South America), wrote about Catholics and Perón's five year plan, and he was not exactly against it. But things have changed now, and since the vitriolic attacks on the Church by Perón, the leaders of the Church in Argentina do not oppose the formation of a Christian Democratic Party. They will not, of course, support it, because the Church is to refrain from politics, but the important thing is that they will not sabotage the party.

One immediate difficulty is that a group of opportunists calling themselves Christian Democrats have taken to visiting many Catholics in their homes, asking support for the group's political adventures. Many of those visited favored Christian Democracy as an ideal and since they had not the slightest idea who their visitors were, they fell into the trap. But aside from such difficulties, the authentic Christian Democrats are now in a privileged position to win the people. They know the meaning of social justice and, what is much more important, they have a love for the people. During General Lonardi's provisional government they will have their big chance. Like all the former opposition parties, the Christian Democrats must have specific answers to the questions that the workers raise. If they do not, the door will again be open to a tyranny which seeks to return.

TWO APPEALS

Father Aloysius Ravalico, S.B.D., Salesian Missions, 148 Main Street, New Rochelle, N. Y., writes that since August 28, when the note about his emergency campaign for flood victims in North India appeared in The Commonweal, new floods have greatly aggravated the situation of his people. Since that date more than five thousand additional persons have been left homeless and are faced with starvation. Father Ravalico seeks funds for food, clothes and medicine.

The *Société Nationale de la Croix Rouge Haitienne* of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, is the agency charged with distributing relief to victims of a famine resulting from the devastation by hurricane of a year ago. Dr. Louis Roy, President of this branch of the Red Cross, writes that the famine is especially severe in certain southern parts of the island. (Air Mail to Haiti: 10¢)

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Varieties of Innocence

GERALD WEALES

TO have moved, as I did a few years ago, from a college in Georgia to one near New York is like having moved out of an area of innocence into one of infinite wordly wisdom. The new students that I met in classes in Newark appeared to be so knowing, probably because they used with such facility all of the less genteel sex slang, words that I seldom heard in Atlanta outside the faculty lounge. What is more, the words dropped so carelessly, were delivered with none of the stagey uncertainty that characterizes even the mildest epithet, the underlined *damn,* that one expects to hear from an actor in the theater or an adolescent trying to convince the world that he is a man. By the time I had accepted the speech pattern as a natural one, I had assigned to the speakers an awareness that their seventeen or eighteen years could not carry with any real assurance. I was always a little surprised, and a little pleased, too, when a lurking naiveté peeped suddenly around the edge of the bold front that their vocabulary and my indulgence had created for them, when I recognized that they were essentially as young as the politely quiet Southerners who would never have dared to speak so freely in my presence. I remember one testimony to innocence which turned up, of all places, on an examination.

In one of my freshman literature courses we spent a few fruitless weeks examining modern poetry. I did not expect, nor did I get, any real enthusiasm for the beauty of the poems that we labored over, but, since it was an engineering college at which I then taught, I thought that the intricacies of Yeats or Stevens might be momentarily entrancing, like an unsolved mathematics problem. The reaction was fitfully spirited; there were occasional comments volunteered from the floor, suggestions that came unelicited, startling breaks in the general hush of masked indifference. Since the boys were at an age when only Kipling, Service or, in the gentler cases, the Romantics at their most sloppy could be expected to appeal, if any poetry could, I was secretly a little pleased that they bore with patience the poets' concern with advancing age, religious conversion and the aesthetics of writing poetry, problems which seemed as fantastic to them as their admiration for male quartets who sing lyrics that are made up solely of disjointed syllables seemed to me. I decided to reward them mildly, to break the monotony of the inevitable quiz. When I drew up a list of questions on the poems we had read, I stuck into the middle of the exam the suggestion that they explain to me what Ogden Nash was getting at in "Reflections on Ice-Breaking," which we had never looked at during the term.

When the time came, I passed out the exam papers, listened to the familiar groans of anguish and then settled back to wait for the halfway mark, for that moment when, tired of worrying uncertain answers, they came with delight on Nash's lines:

Candy — But liquor
Is dandy — Is quicker.

I waited and waited and waited. There was no sudden laughter, no jubilant moment of recognition. There was only the continuing expanse of lowered heads and the hands moving nervously across the pages.

I began to suspect that the exam was too difficult, that the class had drowned in the early questions, when one student, the only veteran in the class, raised his head and threw me a quick knowledgeable smile before he bent again to his work. With this signaled assurance I began to walk up and down the aisles, to read answers over slightly affronted shoulders. I discovered that Mr. Nash was offering advice on how to give a successful party, on how to entertain a business prospect, on how to make a stranger feel welcome. I discovered that one boy found the poem "very amusing," but that he could not imagine what it had to do with ice-breaking. From another, whose mother must certainly keep the house loaded with health foods, I learned that Mr. Nash was warning us all that, although candy is dangerous to the health of the body, it is not nearly so shocking a killer as liquor is. I continued to walk and to read and the more I walked and the more I read the lighter of heart I became. They just did not understand what the poet was suggesting. Yes, Virginia, there are the pure in heart.

THESE same engineering students, however, had not even the surface of political wisdom. The

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average student was only vaguely aware of the world at large. His only knowledge of national and international events (non-sporting, that is) came to him almost accidentally, from the newscasts sandwiched between the disk jockeys who oozed from his car radio as he drove to school each morning or from the headlines on the Steve Allen show at which he glanced just before he fell asleep across his calculus book each evening. If he were asked for a judgment of any kind he was almost certain to express what the sociologists glibly call *received opinion*. His politics, in so far as he had any, were a strange hodge-podge from the popular magazines, seen through his father darkly.

At least once each year I try to stir up some thinking by asking my freshmen classes in composition to write themes on current events. Always they are given a week's notice so that, momentarily at least, they can become as informed as a casual glance at one newspaper will allow them to be. When the class meets, I write on the board a number of possible topics, always those most insistently in the news, and sit back waiting resignedly for the results. I am never surprised; I am never shocked; I am never even particularly pleased. The themes are consistently conservative, bromidic and respectable.

One morning toward the end of the last school year the boys in one of my classes were laboring over such themes. As usually happened on writing days, the bell rang and caught the stragglers still searching desperately for the correct spelling of a word or putting the finishing touches on what they hoped would be a well-turned final sentence. The next class began to move in; the instructor, one of my colleagues in the sciences, hovered over me, wearing the same non-committal smile that I had seen every Friday morning for the whole semester. I was too busy gathering up the finished themes and searching my pockets for a rubber band to bind them to pay much attention to him, even to hear the specific words coming from his mouth; I supposed that it was the same amiable greeting that he had dropped on my desk on other mornings or some meaningless little joke about the work of grading that lay before me. I was muttering a reply in kind, when I finally realized that his soft voice had become a conspiratorial whisper. He was saying, "Are those the titles of your themes?" He was obviously reading with interest the blackboard which was scrawled with my suggestions that the students write on the defense of the Formosan off-shore islands, on the morality of the wire-tap, on Harvey Matusow and the idea of the paid informer, on the proposed merger of the CIO and AFL.

"Yes, yes," I mumbled. "I like to have them write on the news once in awhile."

"You know," he said, sidling toward me, leaning slightly as though to share a secret, "you men in the English Department are better off than the rest of us."

I could only look at him confusedly.

"Yes," he went on. "You know more about the students than we do. Every year some of the seniors take jobs that demand clearance, you know, and the FBI men are always coming around to ask questions. All you would have to do is remember what they say on these papers and I bet you'd have plenty to tell."

He smiled benignly and then turned to face his class. I was out the door and down two flights of stairs to my office before I came to my senses enough to say, "Well, I'll be damned." Maybe we all are.

THE STAGE

THE FRENCH LESSON

THE unique and various pleasures of MM. Marcel Marceau *(at the Barrymore)* and Maurice Chevalier *(at the Lyceum)* but embellish their strict dramatic relevance at this tender point of the season. We shall, no doubt, within the year, enjoy many subtle triumphs of sensibility and theatrical craft, yet very little, I venture to guess, will have the eloquence and concentrated reality of M. Marceau's simplest pantomime. Most assuredly, we shall be exposed to "personality" in its fullest and most seductive forms, yet no personality, I daresay, will be so supple and adroit, so deft, so potent, so harmoniously displayed within its conscious limitations as M. Chevalier's. The French visitors have unfailingly established a tone, and set a standard: gracefully, they have assumed the burden of French civilization and art, which is to instruct us in the refined possibilities of life.

M. Marceau, at one time a member of Jean-Louis Barrault's company, is a foremost exponent of the art of mime—the art, that is, of "expressing feelings by attitudes, and not . . . . of expressing words through gestures." Now a certain sophisticated preciousness enfolds the subject of mime; for one thing, its devotees have relentlessly taken to calling it "meem." (These are the persons for whom Mr. Eliot's confidential *clurk* was a *clark,* and may their tribe decrease.) Yet the proprietary sentiment is not justified for, of all the arts, pantomime is the most directly and immediately accessible—least obscured by the screen of private vision—and with a dramatic heritage receding beyond even Aristotle's definition

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of tragedy as the imitation of an action. No one responsive to Chaplin's particular sense of life, for example, need fear the complexities of mime, and to those who might wish to investigate the theoretic basis of mime, I would recommend Mr. Eric Bentley's illuminating essay, "The Purism of Etienne Decroux," in his Anchor volume, *In Search of Theater*.

M. Marceau distinguishes his illustrious heritage. To the essential equipment of the mime—muscular economy and control, the power to suggest movement in stillness—he contributes something sharply individual: not personality (rigorously deleted from these sketches) but a kind of lyricism, what the program note astutely calls "the music of his silence." He is the poet of the ego alone with its fantasies: the chronicler of those moments when natural forces and the outside world—wind and clothes and staircases—lose their inert, disinterested passivity, and actively war against the embattled human spirit. (In London, once, I heard a woman on a moving escalator address it indignantly: "Damn you, escalator! Why can't you run *properly?*" M. Marceau would have understood, and sympathized.) And when he turns to that external world for observation, this mime brilliantly creates its otherness. Bulk, solidity, richness—they are as present in these comic montages of a public park, a provincial ball, as they are in the novels of Balzac. Yet the comic note is not the only one within M. Marceau's range. In the celebrated pantomime, "Youth, Maturity and Old Age," he distills the essence of human experience—the vision splendid, always dimly seen, forever out of reach—and expresses it with the plastic beauty and just bearable intensity of the highest art.

I am not troubled, for good or ill, with the detritus of memory, and so for me, M. Maurice Chevalier was an experience of singular and virginal freshness. At intermission, one heard lamentation over the toll of envious age and time, yet what can the old splendor have been, I wonder, when we have here so much that is various and rich, ideally human? Mr. Jacques Barzun once deplored just such use of the word *human* in praise such as I have given (concentration camps, he would remind us, are as 'human' as carousels), yet there is, I think, a special propriety in applying it to such a figure as M. Chevalier. We have seen in our time so much grubbiness and concocted talent and meretricious beauty —so many bright morning faces on which neither time nor experience nor suffering will leave a mark—that what astonishes us in the face of a Chevalier (or a Garbo, a Dietrich, a Chaplin) is simply this: its wisdom. I do not mean knowledge, I mean *wisdom:* awareness of what we love and value, compassion and sensitivity, the unbought grace of life (if you will), harmonious existence *dans le vrai.*

I have made a great light artist out to be a kind of secular saint or, worse still, an edifying bore—what, you will say, of "Mimi" and "Louise" and "Valentin?" M. Chevalier has purveyed just such tender clichés and mild *boulevard* salacities for half a century, yet not for a moment has he been taken in by them. A sudden, intimate grin, the tongue passed quickly over that ripe, jutting lower lip disclose the benign fraud in which we have all conspired. He is shrewd, too, with that preternatural French sagacity—he knows that personality is one thing, and art another; that certain kinds of experience (pathos, for example) are not for him. He entertains but he does not trifle; he is intent on giving value for value; there is respect and civility in everything he does, and though he may occasionally be indecent, he is not even brushed by the wing of vulgarity. They remain, MM. Marceau and Chevalier, lordly masters of their arts, and monuments to what the British critic, Mr. Kenneth Tynan, has called our most primitive theatrical response: the awe of uniqueness.

N. B. A ludicrous misprint in the issue of October 7 finds me (in the guise of Old Scrooge) seriously contending that Mr. Thornton Wilder did not seek to dramatize "the Christmas spirit." This should, of course, read *Christian* spirit.

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

MAN'S CASTLE

WE'RE in the midst of a minor movie cycle these days—a rash of films about homes being invaded by ruthless killers looking for a hide-away. This is a cycle that could quickly burn itself out on stage and screen, and perhaps now that "The Desperate Hours" is filmed it will prove the definitive version of this theme and the cycle will be dropped for a while—or at least until there's a re-make of "Kind Lady."

"The Desperate Hours" succeeds in being more than just a movie of violence and terror—although it is that for those who want only a few vicarious thrills from a film. But Joseph Hayes, who wrote the screenplay from his novel and stage play, managed to give his characters some depth; and William Wyler, who produced and directed the picture (with the stunning black-and-white photography of Lee Garmes in VistaVision) instilled these characters with lively realism that makes the siege doubly effective. Fredric March and Martha Scott are excellent

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as the father and mother of a just-grown-up daughter (Mary Murphy) and a young son (Richard Eyer) who has to be convinced when the gangsters take over that this "is not like in the comic books—those are real bullets." The three escaped convicts who use this quiet, everyday-sort-of-house in suburban Indianapolis are played by Humphrey Bogart, as their psychopathic leader who hopes to kill the deputy sheriff (Arthur Kennedy), Dewey Martin, as his young brother, and Robert Middleton, as a brutal thug.

Wyler develops the first part of his picture slowly, almost too slowly, and only the promise of something to happen keeps you interested. But when something does happen, the suspense is terrific. And when "The Desperate Hours" eventually becomes a nerves-and-brains war between right and wrong as exemplified by March and Bogart, it is magnificent to watch.

IF a man's home is inviolable, so can a whole group of homes be—and that is the point that "Blood Alley" tries to make. John Wayne plays a Merchant Marine captain who is hired by a village in Red China to move its one hundred eighty inhabitants through the Formosa Straits to Hong Kong. How Wayne does this in an old ferry makes for some very exciting movie fare. And producer-director William A. Wellman has handled his large cast of assorted characters well; but unfortunately the screen-play by A. S. Fleischman gets unreasonably pretentious at times, and throughout the whole movie we have Wayne talking, with a sort of Greek Chorus effect, to an off-stage "Baby" he invented to save his mind when he was being brain-washed by the Reds. This cluttering up of the story and the film's peculiar editing make it quite hard to follow at times. But when Director Wellman sticks to the main business at hand or concentrates on the characters—the Chinese, as well as Wayne and American Lauren Bacall (whose performances grow better with every movie she's in)—he comes up with an almost epic kind of cinema. Parts of "Blood Alley", in fact, ring out like a hymn of praise to the indomitable and heroic Chinese.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"WEEK BY WEEK"

Paris, France

TO the Editors: I have been troubled recently by contradictions in the editorial comment of The Commonweal, one of my favorite publications. In this letter, I shall touch upon only two, one a note in the August 19 issue in flagrant violation of the often expressed Commonweal definitions of a healthy society and a sane economy, and the other, the sum of the contradictions inherent in the editorial policy of the magazine with regard to underdeveloped countries, as shown in the "Week by Week" pages of the August 26 issue.

How can The Commonweal reconcile the views expressed in "Certain Uses of Credit" with a policy that has long warned against the over-extension of public and private indebtedness in the United States? It has been years since I have seen the *Wall Street Journal,* but I remember it as a consistent advocate of sound economic policy, tending toward deflation and likely to look upon the family described in the article as a greater menace to the American economy than Karl Marx. Such a family would remind its readers of the Coolidge era and its aftermath. Surely the installment buying, in a large measure responsible for the "Boom and Bust" cycles in the economic history of the United States, is not a feature of that economy to be held up for the emulation of Europe and Asia. ". . . . As an Elephant's Eye" in the August 12 issue, though rather incoherent, is more in line with Commonweal policy.

After reading "Certain Uses of Credit," I had to flick over the page to make sure from the cover that what I held in my hand was not a copy of the New York *Daily News* (known to me by notoriety alone), *Colliers,* the *Saturday Evening Post,* or the *Reader's Digest* (none of which I have seen for many years). It could also have been a parody of a purported paean of the American way of life in the *Daily Worker* or in *l'Humanité,* with the ever-present implication that the desire is not so much to raise the standard of living of the European worker as to provide a market for the unloading of surplus gadgets whose over-production menaces the American economy. "A lot of questions" are raised not only "as to this American worker's sense of values" but as to the sense of values of two such intelligent publications as The Commonweal and the *Wall Street Journal.* What The Commonweal did in the columns of the August 19 issue, is exactly what it reproaches the Des Moines *Register* with doing in "Iowa's Way" on August 26.

And never did I expect to read in the columns of The Commonweal the word "home" when what is meant is "house" (cf. "Certain Uses of Credit").

I had intended to comment on the "Crisis in North Africa" item sentence by sentence, but since this letter was begun has come the deeply disturbing decision of the UN to deliberate an internal problem of one of its member nations. The UN vote has brought long-time partisans of reforms in North Africa

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such as *Le Monde* into an unwilling alliance with their erstwhile opponents. Whatever one's opinion of the realism of treating Algeria as if the country were three French departments such as the Moselle, Sarthe, or the Bouches-du-Rhone, the fact remains that legally Algeria is an integral part of France. The UN, which was brought into being in order to uphold law among nations, sets a dangerous precedent in deliberately violating a regulation of its own making.

The UN decision on Algeria may delay rather than further reforms in North Africa because it does in reverse what the reactionnaries have done in relation to the nationalists. The latter, by denying the North African's just claim to local autonomy, goaded them into demanding an independence which is neither possible nor likely to better their condition. The UN decision will strengthen the hand of those who refuse legitimate reforms by placing on the defensive those Frenchmen who have long seen the need for reform, but who do not admit the possibility of North Africa going the way of Indochina.

North Africa is as necessary to France as Texas or California to New England, as the Ukraine to Moscow. Without it, she cannot remain a great power, and in the world in which we live, a nation is either a great power or a satellite. France is necessary to Europe and Europe to the world. A world in which only the United States and Russia are powers is neither safe nor pleasant to contemplate. Only two nations can speak for Europe, France or Germany, and Germany, whatever its scientific achievements, its industrial and war potential, is the antithesis of the European idea. The liberals in the UN who voted to place the Algerian question on the agenda, may unknowingly (or knowingly) have voted for a Europe either illiberal or Communist.

The Commonweal, through the articles of Martin Turnell, of Wallace Fowlie and of Robert Barrat, has shown an understanding of France's importance to Western civilization beyond that of any other U.S. publication. But there is a contradiction between that appreciation and the anti-colonialist thesis. To urge that France's material power be shorn from her and then to expect her to continue her contribution to the intellectual life of the West is to hope that a head can live cut off from its body. Greece's spiritual decline coincided with her loss of independence. Spain produced Cervantes, Velasquez, El Greco, St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross at the apex of her power. She has contributed little since the loss of her empire. There have been no greater musicians than those the Austro-Hungarian Empire gave to the world, but what has been heard from Vienna since Sadowa?

But is the French presence in North Africa compatible with the best interests of those countries? Yes. Their troubles are at once psychological and economic in nature, and anti-colonialism has solutions for neither order of problems. As was pointed out in the excellent article in a spring issue, "Is Starvation Inevitable?" the primary need of undeveloped countries is private investment, and private investment will venture its capital only in countries endowed with stable, experienced, responsible governments. Nothing discourages serious private investors so much as the disorders fanned by theoretical anti-colonialism. Resources for the rapidly growing North African populations can be developed only under the guarantee of a major power, and France's achievement in North Africa gives her the right to be that power.

But France's presence in North Africa has another, a higher justification. When Robert Barrat, Louis Massillon, Francois Mauriac, Robert Schumann and General Catroux (the latter one of the collaborators of Marechal Lyautey) say that there are abuses and grave injustices in French North Africa, I believe them. But, paradoxically, I find in their position the best justification for France's presence in North Africa. To say that as long as there are human governments there will be abuses and miscarriages of justice is to condone neither. What is exceptional is that men who are not themselves oppressed, who are not directly touched by that against which they protest, should devote their lives to righting what they consider an injustice. At a meeting last February to discuss the Algerian question at the Centre des Intellectuels Catholiques, moderated by M. Schumann, and at which Robert Barrat spoke, that fact was movingly commented upon by several of the North Africans present.

That attitude is only among men of the Occident—exceptional men, it is true, and in it, even more than in its material achievement, can be found the justification not only of France, but of the West, in their relation to other peoples.

JUNE LOCKETT.

"PATRIOTISM AND RELIGION"

Baldwin, N. Y.

TO the Editors: It seems to a very interested reader that the fruitful controversy between the St. Louis *Register* and The Commonweal could profit by a few distinctions. Both parties seem to agree that, as a matter of *fact,* non-religious men are sometimes excellent citizens, but, asks the *Register,* what basis do such men have for practicing the civic virtues?—and the *Indiana Catholic and Record* answers that they have no logical reason but are living on the patrimony of their Christian past.

First of all, it seems that The Commonweal and the St. Louis *Register* are not always talking about the same thing. At least they are not always using the same word to mean the same thing. The word 'religious' is the one I have particularly in mind.

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Most of the time it is employed to describe a man with an active faith in revealed religion. But there is another sense in which every man is 'religious'—that is, all men, whether they acknowledge the fact or not, are by their very nature linked to what the St. Louis paper calls *God's* Natural Law. Sometimes the *Register*-Commonweal controversy seems to have been clouded because, without warning, the meaning of 'religious' is shifted to this second meaning—and right in the middle of a syllogism, too!

The Commonweal, for instance, argues that the non-religious man (i.e., the man without faith) may be a good citizen; then the St. Louis editors say that if a man is not religious (i.e., does not observe God's Natural Law) good citizenship is impossible; therefore The Commonweal is wrong. But a man may be non-religious (i.e., without faith) and still know God's Natural Law and be guided by its precepts. Not religious faith but belief in his own true nature and in the nature of society may impel such a man. Too much energy has gone into the Catholic argument that the Natural Law is known to man because of his very nature for that point to require amplification.

The theoretical question in this controversy, then, seems to go this way: Is a man who has not been gifted with supernatural faith capable of the natural virtues which good citizenship demands? Obviously yes, since such men are to be found on all sides. Well, then, can a "good" citizen find reason for his virtue without having recourse to the teachings of revealed religion? Or, in other words, is the virtue of faith a pre-requisite for the virtues of citizenship?

It would seem that it is not, if we accept the idea that man is by nature a political animal, as all good Thomists do, and remember that the highest Catholic authorities have demanded good government and good citizenship even from those nations not blessed with the supernatural wisdom of the Gospels. We would do well to remember, too, that St. Thomas Aquinas himself relied heavily on the wisdom of pagan philosophers when he wrote about political matters.

Discussing the cardinal virtues, St. Thomas distinguished between *political, perfecting, perfect* and *exemplar* virtues. He stated that "since man by his nature is a political animal, these virtues, in so far as they are in him *according to the conditions of his nature,* are called *political* virtues; for it is by reason of them that man deports himself well in the conduct of human affairs."

Human virtues can be perfected. Patriotism may become a manifestation of Christian charity when, through the *perfecting* virtues, it is consciously directed to the supernatural love of God. But does this mean, then, that the political consequences of the political virtues are essentially changed? I think not. A non-believing American may vote against restrictive covenants because simple justice and the common good lead him to do so; a Christian citizen may add a supernatural element—he may vote the way he does not only because simple justice and the common good make their demands but also because he recognizes the Negro victim of the covenant as a child of God and brother in Christ. Yet the two citizens are indistinguishable at the polls.

There would appear to be no reason for The Commonweal to duck the syllogisms the St. Louis editors are asking for. Let us try a few:

A. The political virtues are human virtues.
B. Men without faith are capable of exercising human virtues.
C. Therefore men without faith are capable of exercising the political virtues.

Or:

A. In Christians the human virtues are supernaturalized but not destroyed.
B. The political virtues are human virtues.
C. Therefore the political virtues can be supernaturalized but not destroyed.

Add:

A. The supernaturalizing of human virtues does not change their external manifestations.
B. The political virtues are human virtues.
C. The supernaturalizing of the political virtues does not change their external manifestations.

Other syllogisms suggest themselves:

A. Human virtues do not depend for their existence on being supernaturalized.
B. The political virtues are human virtues.
C. Therefore the political virtues do not depend for their existence on being supernaturalized.

And:

A. Men without faith can have the human virtues.
B. Patriotism is a human virtue.
C. Men without faith can be patriotic.

Which means:

A. If there were an *essential* link between patriotism and faith, men without faith could not be patriotic.
B. Men without faith can be patriotic.
C. Therefore there is no essential link between patriotism and faith.

It is true, as Maritain said and as the Indiana *Catholic and Record* recalled, that our democracy is the result of currents released by the preaching of Christianity. But, again, we are dealing not with philosophy but with history. A Christian society need not be democratic, and there have been democratic

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societies untouched by Christianity. Maritain's point is a good one, but it seems to be an historical insight rather than to involve any abstract philosophical principle.

This is not to deny that our society—a product of philosophy *and* history—has been largely shaped by Christianity. It has. But to say this is not to claim, either, that by rejecting Christianity men necessarily reject the political results of Christianity. (I reject Calvinism but I am not ready to give up the concrete results of its contribution to American political thought.) Millions of men have been willing to lay down their lives for Christian values while still rejecting Christianity as a supernatural religion. They may, tragically, be without faith, but I am not at all sure they are without reason, for the consequences of Christianity are of surpassing worth in themselves.

The central point, I think, is that we can not ask men to be Christians and believers for any but reasons of supernatural truth, and—what is more important—men will not be Christians without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Faith is a gift. It cannot be issued from any Washington bureau office or be bestowed as a reward for patriotic services by the American Legion.

We can not say: Be Christians because Christianity means a sound political order or a just social order or even because faith will enrich your family life. All these things are possible without Christianity, and even if they were not, they would not in themselves justify Christianity's claim on man.

The St. Louis editors speak of secularism. But I think that the spirit of secularism hovers over the man who would choose his religion because of its temporal consequences — as Santayana preferred Catholicism because it produced a serene, beautiful way of life—or as the French existentialist (though he does not believe in God) has his child confirmed because it is the "French" thing to do. By the same token the spirit of secularism might hover over the Christian who is patriotic merely because it is the "religious" (and "proper") thing to be.

JOHN COGLEY.

BOOKS

Spanish Poet in an American Metropolis

POET IN NEW YORK. By Federico García Lorca. A New Translation by Ben Belitt. Grove Press. $3.75.

By JACK PATTERSON

"A CURIOUS thing about Spanish literature," Gerald Brenan once wrote, "is that it travels badly." Cervantes, he noted, is an exception. The work of Federico García Lorca, the Spanish poet best known to non-Spanish readers, is fast becoming another exception. His plays are produced to the acclaim of an increasing audience, and his verse is widely-read and admired. The "Selected Poems" was recently published, and this new translation of "Poet in New York" provides further evidence of the continuing popularity and enduring value of this great poet.

In the summer of 1929, following the enormous success of his just published collection, *"Romancero Gitano,"* Lorca, troubled by some vague emotional crisis, left Spain for the first time, came to New York and took up residence as a student in John Jay Hall at Columbia University. He spent practically none of his time in the classroom, but much of it roaming through the city. He left for Cuba early in 1930, having learned no English whatever. But that short stay produced the anguished, death-haunted "Poet in New York" which, Lorca wrote to a friend, "marks a point of contact between my own poetical world and the poetical world of New York."

In "Poet in New York" Lorca turned away from the nature lyrics and gypsy ballads that had brought him prominence, to record the impact of a dizzying megalopolis. His horror, disgust and pain demanded a new style, and he began to write a kind of surrealistic verse, whose kaleidoscopic, broken images mirrored his own whirling emotions. The book's ten sections pass from the confusion and loneliness of the opening "Poems of Solitude at Columbia University," through the phantasmagoric evocations of "Streets and Dreams" to a controlled yet savage attack on the City in the concluding "Return to the City" and "Two Odes." Poems like "Dance of Death" and "Landscape of the Urinating Multitudes" burn with Lorca's hatred for a city whose disruptive power, spiritual emptiness, crassness and incoherence tormented him. The poet felt *simpatía* only for the Negroes, primitive innocents already tinged with the corruption of a vile civilization.

"Above all, the Negroes!" he wrote in a letter. "For the spiritual axis of America has been shaped by their sadness. The Negro, living close to pure human nature and the other forces of Nature. The Negro, spilling music out of his pockets. Apart from the Art of the Negro, the United States has nothing to show but machines and automatons." In the violent poem "The King of Harlem" the Negro embodies the poet's protest against the false and stultifying city; and Lorca's admiration for the Negro is voiced in the affirmative ring end-

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ing what is probably the book's finest poem and its spiritual conclusion, the "Ode to Walt Whitman." While America "drowns in engines and tears," the poet chooses as a spokesman "a little black boy" who "declares to the gold-getting white/ kingdom come in a tassel of corn."

Critics have disputed the worth of "Poet in New York." (It was not published until after Lorca's murder.) Roy Campbell thinks it is inferior to Lorca's folk poetry. "Andalucia is Lorca's *querencia,*" he said—the *querencia* being that part of the bull ring the bull elects as his own. He believes that Lorca, away from Andalucia's tradition of verse, music and dance, faltered. "His metaphors and imagery fall out of focus; his verse becomes loose, plaintive and slightly mephitic." But Ángel del Río argues persuasively in his excellent introduction to the present translation that the "Poet in New York" is an organic part of Lorca's work, and that his capacity to deal with new, alien experience is a measure of his stature as a poet. In any event, whatever the intrinsic value of "Poet in New York" and its place in Lorca's *oeuvre,* the book is powerful and exciting, filled with poems that grip the imagination.

Rolfe Humphries' pioneering translation of "Poet in New York" (1940) was a fairly literal treatment. This new translation not only can claim, by the inclusion of several poems omitted in the earlier volume, to be the first complete English edition, but it has attempted more than the earlier version—to "re-create" rather than merely translate, to explore "a dimension of translation." Rejecting the "self-serving complacencies of the 'accurate' way," Mr. Belitt wished to contemplate the universe of the given poem as its creator orginally contemplated the universe of his given experience . . . as a precarious search for exactitudes, correspondences, analogies which will mirror their model only in flashes . . ."

This is an admirable aim, but it raises certain inevitable questions, chiefly, to what extent is one reading translator rather than poet? Mr. Belitt's translations read well as English poems, and a reader unfamiliar with the originals might find little to quarrel with; but a reader with even a little Spanish (the Spanish text is given *en face*) may be surprised, and in the case of this reader, at least, a bit annoyed at some of Mr. Belitt's liberties.

And this is not a pedantic insistence on literalness. With poem after poem, Mr. Belitt achieves brilliant over-all results ("Pattern and Paradise of Negroes," "Landscape of the Urinating Multitudes," and "Christmas on the Hudson" are three random examples) but the effect is often marred by a predilection for finding a "poetic" word where Lorca used a simple one; where Lorca is particular and concrete, Mr. Belitt is often general and metaphoric. His taste for turning direct images into metaphors serves to make the poems seem even more abstract than they are.

A few examples will suffice. In "Dawn" Lorca wrote of "a shipwreck of blood" (*un naufragio de sangre*). Mr. Belitt renders it "a bloody disaster" changing Lorca's specific shipwreck that fits so well with "blood" (a sea of blood, etc.) to the more general "disaster." Three poems contain the images, "a dazzling dove" (*una deslumbrante paloma*) "abandoned children" (*abandonados niños*) and "silent boats" (*barcos mudos*). In Mr. Belitt's words these become, "a dazzle of doves," "the dispossessed childhoods," and "a stillness of boats." Now one may even prefer "a dazzle of doves," but is such an "improvement" proper when it has the effect of distorting, however slightly, the poet's sensibility?

In spite of these strictures, Mr. Belitt has done a remarkable job of turning difficult poetry into English that stands astonishingly well by itself and conveys much of the quality of the original. The reader who knows Lorca will find room for this book on his bookshelf; the reader unfamiliar with this poet will find reading him an experience to which he will return, again and again.

Mannered Elegance

THE BOY IN BLUE. By Monica Stirling. Coward-McCann. $3.

By NORA MAGID

IT is an interesting phenomenon, culturally, that when American ladies of literary bent try their hand at romance, the result more often than not is sentimentality of the soggy sort that is considered characteristic of the slick magazines. Yet when English or French ladies indulge themselves similarly, they contrive somehow, in the course of manipulating the same ingredients, to whip up veritable meringues of cool and clever grace.

Monica Stirling is a relatively recent comer in a procession that extends back at least to Jane Austen. She writes a neat and delicate prose, as deliberate as it seems artless. The plot in *The Boy in Blue* is slight, but the exposition, the dialogue, the symbols, are all calculated components in an elaborately structured comedy of manners.

Her real gift is for description, both emotional and physical. Laurent, the withdrawn and moody French boy, who writes cerebral music and distrusts people, drives a second-hand Renault that looks for all the world "like a decayed beetle." When he consents to meet Marie-Louise, it is only because having heard that she is like him, half-English, he has conjured up a vision of "a charming white-haired character midway between Cranford and Mrs. Miniver, with a touch of Betsy Trotwood, surrounded by a log fire, bright chintzes, a silver tea pot, buttered toast, and Gentleman's Relish. He had never tasted Gentleman's Relish, but his mother had told him about it during one of the greedy conversations induced by wartime shortages. So definite were his expectations that he became prematurely self-conscious over the problem of milk or lemon in tea. Which ought he to ask for? Which was more English? Here his memory was no help: his mother had been devoted to the blackest coffee."

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The lady turns out, not unexpectedly, to be a great beauty, though twice his age. Their subsequent affair liberates both of them — he from the bondage of isolation, she from the pursuit of youth. The lady is not only attractive, she is articulate; yet so delicately and gracefully delineated that it does not seem too unlikely that she should tell her suitor, "I'm reputed—you haven't heard it yet, but you will, someone'll see to that —to be a *grande amoureuse*, etc., in a rather pejorative sense."

For all the mannered elegance—and the characters operate much of the time as if they were at one of the fancy dress balls to which the lady is addicted—there are genuinely touching moments. A sense of real horror about the war is unobtrusively conveyed. The child, Laurent, whose veterinarian father has been killed by the Germans, packs in his small suitcase, when he is Paris-bound, a hoof-pick, "that might come in useful, should he meet a limping horse." Like Frankie in *Member of the Wedding*, the adult Laurent states his loneliness: "We don't belong to anything. At the Conservatoire, I sometimes heard people talking about politics, or religion—well, not that so often, but sometimes and it was extraordinary. Like dancers. Have you ever heard dancers among themselves? It sounds like a private world, with nothing in it but dancing—dancing and something that makes them feel reinforced when they say *we*. But you and I don't belong to a we. We're on our own. At least we were—and it's the not being that's love, isn't it?"

The love cannot, however, endure. He must always be a stranger to her world of endless charades and ennui. Through her he is able to go through his private looking-glass, to proceed past emotional numbness, through "an opalescent bubble inside which it seemed to him, he heard, touched, tasted, saw, for the first time," to reality, with its stake in the future.

There is very little grist here for the bestseller mill; but it is a civilized book and a witty one, written with intelligence and charm.

The Great Emancipator

LINCOLN THE PRESIDENT: Last Full Measure. By G. Randall and Richard N. Current. Dodd, Mead & Co. $7.50.

By JOHN COURNOS

PROFESSOR Randall lived long enough to write three and a half volumes of his distinguished four-volume study of Lincoln. The last half of this, the fourth and final volume, was done by Professor Current, who, using the notes left by the original author, has successfully maintained the spirit in which Professor Randall conceived and executed his task.

Professor Randall did not set out to "re-create" the President's life, or "dramatize" it, to use the parlance of modern publishing. He was not an architect who spent as much or more effort on external decoration as on the essential structure to impress susceptible onlookers. Rather he set his mind on the building of a simple, monolithic form whose very shape and solidity impress far more than the orateness created by devotees determined to maintain a legend. Carl Sandburg may be excluded from the implications of this criticism. His monumental work on Lincoln is relatively rambling and without form, but it offers rich compensations in its massing of intimacies and highlights, designed to establish quantitatively the virtues, the character, the tenderness and the humor of one unique in the annals of humanity.

Compared with Sandburg's work, Professor Randall's big book, disdaining anecdotal impressions, is more austere, more precise, and, in a sense, more limited—limited not so much in scope as in its effort, successful on the whole, to create a portrait which does not over-run the frame. Greatness, according to Goethe, is to be able to achieve within one's limitations; and it is precisely in this sense that this work has distinction. Despite its four-

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Recent weeks have provided several good examples. The relationship between religion and patriotism is the theme of one of the most extensive of these debates. Another has had to do with the rights of Negroes, particularly in the American South. A third has dealt with the rights of non-conformity in our democracy. A fourth examined the proper limitations to censorship by the State.

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volume bulk, it practices economy, in that it limits itself strictly to facts, organized and coordinated so skillfully as to give completeness without blurring either the sitter or the complex historical background against which he is posed.

There is one very important aspect to this so unromantic factualness, which is the very essence of this entire work, unviolated by the collaborator: the Lincoln legend does not suffer a whit but is rather enhanced by it. The uniqueness of the man stands out all the more. The documented facts speak their own eloquence in sharp outline, unmarred by romantic imaginings or special pleading.

This volume deals with the last sixteen and most difficult years of Lincoln's life, with stress on the President as a politician, a position he could not have relished, though it has been said: "In being a competent politician, he became a statesman." He was inordinately shrewd in managing men and situations, and he made, incontestably, his best moves when his enemies, and even his friends, thought he was making mistakes. He was scarcely a legend in his own day. He was an enigma, and he excited hostility because men too often loathe that which they cannot understand. No man was ever more execrated; there is no space here for a catalogue of the evil names he was called. But the humble and the lowly adored him.

Few men thought he would be reelected. Such influential journalists as Horace Greeley and James Gordon Bennett thought him wrongheaded in his methods of trying to obtain peace, and they did not favor his candidacy. Charles Francis Adams, Lincoln's own appointee as Ambassador to the Court of St. James, was so obtuse and unperceptive as to regard the President as a vulgar man, unfitted both by education and nature for the post of President. Social and intellectual snobbishness had undoubtedly a share in so inept a judgment. Eminent men of reputation fought against his nomination, and a reputable newspaper argued that to make Lincoln the Union candidate

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would be "most perilous, if not suicidal." Concomitantly, it is a point for reflection today that few of Lincoln's contemporaries found anything to impress them in the now classic Gettysburg speech, or in the final words of the "with charity for all" inaugural address, which actually excited in England the enthusiastic response that it failed to get here at the time it was delivered.

With great forethought Lincoln sought early a formula for reconstruction at the war's end, it being his idea that in time of war you must prepare for peace. He was willing to yield on many points but never on this, expressed with his characteristic simplicity and terseness: "In stating a single condition of peace, I mean simply to say that the war will cease on the part of the government, whenever it shall have ceased on the part of those who began it." First and foremost he wanted the union maintained, and he would have none of Jefferson Davis's "peace between two countries." He knew only one country, and in no circumstance would he give way on this.

The final chapter, entitled "God's Man," discusses Lincoln's religion, and, while it is admitted that he did not belong to any church, it is stressed, with no little documentation, that he was saturated with Christian feeling. Even his fatalism is considered to have been part of it, and there seems to be no doubt that he considered himself an instrument of God's will.

Professor Randall's is a very fine biography which reinforces the Lincoln legend with simple bare facts that bear the impress of finality.

REVIEWERS

Jack Patterson is a member of the editorial staff of the *New Yorker*. With his review of Lorca's "Poet in New York" he makes his first appearance in The Commonweal.

Nora Magid is on the staff of the *Reporter* magazine.

John Cournos is a well known critic, anthologist, and student of Americana. He contributes frequently to this magazine.

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We have a house to put in order . . .

WE HAVE A HOUSE to put in order . . . and it's the house where America lives.

Of our country's many million homes, more than 1 out of every 10 are out-and-out slums. Nearly one-half of all American dwellings are in poor to "fair" condition, and urgently need basic repairs.

That's the house we have to put in order if our constantly growing millions are to enjoy our rising standards of living.

What's your stake in the slums?

If you think your town is different, just look around you. *Every* community, including yours, has houses and blocks and whole areas that need to be put in order.

If you think slums don't touch you as long as you don't live in one, *think again*. Wherever you live, housing problems and slums raise your taxes and depress the value of your house. They mean higher rates of crime, delinquency and disease. They lower the social and economic level of your whole community.

How do slums start?

It's equally important to prevent tomorrow's slums. And that's your problem, too.

How do slums start? Let just one house slide downhill and a whole block changes. Home values drop. Other houses are neglected and decay spreads.

That's why the 20 million homes that need repair and basic improvements deserve just as much attention as out-and-out slums. The time to stop their blight is now, before it spreads.

What can you do about this?

The answer to America's substandard housing problem starts with you. For it's up to you to keep up and improve your own home. And it's up to you and your neighbors to keep your neighborhood *and your whole town* in good condition.

Some slums should be torn down and a fresh start made. Others can be remodeled, made to conform to better living standards. So it is up to you to get behind every sound program which seeks to provide adequate housing for all our people.

New help is now available

There is a new national, non-profit organization called A.C.T.I.O.N.—The American Council To Improve Our Neighborhoods—which is designed to help all individuals or groups interested in putting America's house in order.

Send for a free copy of "ACTION." It explains what A.C.T.I.O.N. is and proposes to do. It lists booklets, research, check-lists, and other material which can help you. Address P. O. Box 500, Radio City Station, New York 20, N. Y.

ACTION

American Council To Improve Our Neighborhoods

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